3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

in the negotiations state explicitly that Sayyid Idris was to be regarded as a spiritual leader and not as a temporal leader.

Sayyid Idris had his first meeting with the Allied Mission on 25 July 1916 and the three-cornered discussions were spread out over the months of August and September. Between the Sanusi and the British there were easy relations from the beginning. Sayyid Idris had made friends with the British in Cairo, trusted them, and desired that the trust might be mutual. The British, for their part, were far from unsympathetic towards the Sanusi, and those who had met him respected the sincerity of their leader. Col. Talbot, while remaining on excellent terms with the Italian delegates, kept the confidence of the Sayyid, although he had sometimes, on behalf of the Italians, to press him to accept demands of which he personally disapproved and which could in no way serve British interests. He found little difficulty in obtaining the release of the British crew of the *Coquet*, who had for some time been prisoners in Sanusi hands.

Italo-Sanusi relations were very different. Sayyid Idris disliked the Italians and he thoroughly distrusted their intentions. The Italians suspected that Sayyid Ahmad and Sayyid Idris were in collusion, though pretending to be at variance, and aimed only at obtaining a temporary truce which would ensure entry into the country of supplies destined for a renewal of the struggle later; and they were resentful of the British, who, they thought, intended to relieve themselves of an embarrassment at the expense of Italy. It was soon evident that there was little hope of a permanent settlement, so a *modus vivendi* was sought which would at least give both sides a chance to recuperate.

At the beginning of the discussions the Italians said that they could only continue them if their prisoners were released, but the Sayyid had no intention of giving them up without a *quid pro quo* and adopted his usual delaying tactics when faced with demands of this kind, pleading that he would first have to ask permission of Sayyid Ahmad who had taken the prisoners, since he could not give one set of instructions and his cousin contrary ones. As Sayyid Ahmad was still at al-Kharja oasis, consultation by camel-mail could be relied on to delay the issue for some weeks. However, largely owing to Col. Talbot, agreement on this point was achieved, only to be overruled by the Italian Government at Rome, which considered its terms humiliating,